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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0504
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUCNSAD/SADC COLLECTIVE
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KINSHASA 001149

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STATE FOR AF/C AND GREAT LAKES SPECIAL ADVISOR WOLPE

E.O.12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [AORC](#) [PREL](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: MASISI LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP YIELDS PROMISING
RESULTS FOR COOPERATION IN NORTH KIVU

11. (SBU) Summary: On December 12 Michel Kassa briefed USAID Mission Director and TDY poloff on a Wilson Center-organized leadership training workshop held November 23-27 in Goma that brought together 100 representatives of six communities in Masisi District, North Kivu. The end results show promise of cooperation among the different tribal groups in the area. An additional conference on conflict is planned for Rutshuru district. End summary.

Why Masisi? Why now?

12. (U) Kassa and his Wilson Center colleagues with USAID concurrence moved to replace other planned workshops with the Masisi forum for two major reasons. First, the historic conflict over who controls the land in the area has escalated due to the new prominence of the ex-CNDP in the local/provincial administration and prospect for large scale returns of IDPs and refugees to Masisi. There is also increased interest from the provincial government, including North Kivu Lt. Governor Feller Lutaichirwa, to discuss the issue among the Masisi communities. In addition, the appropriate Wilson Center facilitators were only available the week of November 122.

Organization

13. (SBU) Kassa explained that the forum was comprised of two sub-meetings of about fifty people each that took place in Goma at the Stella and Karubu Hotels, respectively. The groups combined in the final plenary sessions to negotiate, agree upon and sign a joint statement. Wilson Center forums normally consist of groups of no more than 40 people, but local contacts -- especially Lutaichirwa and North Kivu Coordinator of the provincial peace building support office ("Cellule Provinciale d'Appui a la Pacification") Clovis Munihire -- made clear that such a small group would exclude too many of the essential Masisi stakeholders.

14. (SBU) Participating groups were differentiated by ethnicity and included representatives of the Hutu, Hunde, Kumu, Tembo, Tutsi, and Twa (pygmy) communities. No representatives of the armed wings were explicitly present, though in some cases delegation members spoke for the armed factions. Though the Tutsi delegates took what might be considered a "pro-CNDP" position, they did not represent the splits within the CNDP between the pro-Bosco faction, the political factions, and those who identify with former CNDP leader Laurent

Nkunda.

¶15. (SBU) The workshops differed in another important respect, in that the meetings are usually closed to all except the participants. However, because of the involvement of the international community in the supposed "plot" to dispossess communities in favor of returnees, representatives from UNHCR, UNHABITAT and Eastern Coordination of the UN were asked to be on-call to enter the meetings in order address questions or issues posed to them.

Summary of proceedings

¶16. (SBU) At the start of the workshop, representatives of each group were asked to outline their complaints and grievances as well as the commitments and pledges they were willing to contribute to the solution finding process. Initial participation in this exercise was disheartening when the Tembo representatives outlined only their complaints and problems and refused to make any compromises or commitments. Each of the other communities followed suit in a similar manner focusing only on their grievances and indicating few signs of their willingness to make compromises.

¶17. (SBU) The Hunde delegation leader took the hardest line of all the participants. Kassa asked each group to include their most radical elements, but the Hunde leader insisted he could not speak for Hunde armed elements, and had no influence over them. Further complicating their participation, the delegation leader was not even from Masisi, but lived in Goma.

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¶18. (SBU) The tone of the workshop eventually shifted when the Tembo group, which had initiated the hard line approach, took the first step toward compromise. They modified their unilateral statement and asked the other groups to pardon them for any wounds or offense the Tembo may have caused and, in turn, pardoned the others for anything they may have done against the Tembo. Most of the other groups then followed this vein of compromise and became more accommodating. The Tutsi group asked the others for pardon for the wars and destruction they may have caused, while the Hutus and the Kumas expressed a willingness to work with the others. The Hunde group leader remained recalcitrant -- refusing to apologize and saying that when an apology does not come from the heart it is meaningless. Kassa appealed over his head to others in the Hunde delegation, who agreed to work together with the other Masisi communities.

¶19. (U) At the final plenary, the delegates agreed to (a) keep their agreements; (b) only resolve their problems by non-violent means; (c) treat the complaints and problems of other communities with respect and to search for just and legal ways to resolve them; (d) treat one another with respect; and (e) work through the Technical Commission for Reconciliation and Pacification (STAREC) to peacefully resolve these conflicts.

Kassa sees real progress, but questions remain

¶10. (SBU) The Hunde and Tembo local communities appeared to tone down their accusations that there is a "plot" against them to take their property. They appeared appreciative of the fact that part of the problem, certainly insofar as the Hutu are concerned, is simply demographic. Population growth is a fact of life, not necessarily a plot. (Note: USAID Director and TDY poloff agreed that toning down conspiracy theories is important, but that even if Hutu conspiracy theories are being put to rest, Tutsi conspiracy theories continue to run rampant, especially in the light of CNDP power grabs and poorly documented crossborder population movements from Rwanda. End note.)

¶11. (SBU) UNHCR Coordinator for Eastern DRC Karl Steinacker won cheers from the communities with his "humble but assertive" pledge that UNHCR would not take any actions or decisions about resettling

people unless and until it had discussed the situation fully with all the communities. (Comment: Based on similar statements earlier in the week by Steinacker, it appears that UNHCR is saying it will not take any position -- pro, con, or indifferent -- on population movements within and into Masisi. In other words, UNHCR will not do or say anything on the most controversial and dangerous political and security issue affecting the entire region, even one that is well within its mandate. End comment.)

¶12. (SBU) The local community leaders agreed to the idea that refugees and IDPs from Masisi could indeed return to the area with one caveat: Masisi leaders, or trusted representatives of the state, would screen those coming in to ensure that they were indeed from families who had historically lived there. Representatives of the Tutsi community strongly supported this to ensure that only Tutsis who had a real claim to be inhabitants of the area -- and not Tutsis who had a real claim to be inhabitants of the area -- and not Tutsi outsiders from Rwanda or elsewhere -- were allowed to return. (Note: USAID Director and TDY poloff indicated they would find it extremely unlikely that returnees and people who claim to hold property would put their fates in the hands of autochtone community leaders from different tribes or government officials unless they could guarantee decisions in their favor. End note.)

The CNDP factor

¶13. (SBU) Although the conference appeared to make important progress in bringing people together to discuss and resolve the issues that divide them rather than resort to armed conflict and unilateral action, an important question still remains. The question arises: How does this square with concurrent and subsequent developments, including the declaration of a new anti-government movement based on support from key CNDP elements, new CNDP and other defections from the FARDC, and the establishment of a parallel government structure in Masisi by people associated

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with the CNDP?

¶14. (SBU) Kassa readily admitted that the leadership training discussion in Goma did not take into account the internal strife within the CNDP in general and Bosco Ntaganda's own agenda in particular. He noted that Bosco had a tendency to act like this when he is under stress. For example, he established the MRC in an effort to maintain his relevance in Ituri circa 2004 when Tomas Lubanga and company in the UPC were cutting him loose. Bosco does not speak for the whole CNDP and others associated with the group remain interested in working within the FARDC. Kassa also noted that Seraphin Mirindi, a Mushi who had served as Nkunda's former political advisor, appeared content in the FARDC and others like Laurent Nkunda loyalist Sultani Makenga would not join with Bosco out of contempt for him. Bosco's ability to appeal to Tutsis is limited because many see him as insufficiently cultured or educated. They also see him as being more concerned with his own interests than with the security and interests of the Tutsis and their community. Kassa opined that the CNDP problem could potentially bring down the whole edifice and noted that other observers (he referred to Tutsi businessman Victor Ngezayo in particular) were very worried about the direction of the CNDP and Bosco's influence.

What next?

¶15. (SBU) Kassa said he believes his work with the Wilson Center on the Masisi issue is finished. He hopes that ongoing efforts to build upon progress made during the November conference will involve others -- most notably the provincial government via the STAREC process. He thought that Lt. Governor Lutaichirwa would be willing to build on the Goma talks and Clovis Munihire would make an excellent facilitator. Follow on efforts by the North Kivu provincial authorities are being incorporated under the Government's STAREC program. The North Kivu Peace and Reconciliation Commission, headed by Mr. Munihire, was established on November 9, 2009. Lt. Governor Lutachirwa recently requested funding for the Commission

from USAID in support of a 25 member delegation from the Masisi forum in conducting community outreach regarding the engagements made, in the form of a letter delivered to the TDY USAID representative in Goma.

¶16. (SBU) The next event organized by Kassa and the Wilson Center is a conference on conflict in and around Rutshuru in January. They suspect that Lutaichirwa (who can be a "Jeckyl and Hyde character") might be less supportive in the Rutshuru conference than he had been in the Goma sessions. The Rutshuru conflict, which mainly involves competing claims of Hutu and Nande, is of less interest to Lutaichirwa than Masisi, where Lutaichirwa's Hunde group plays a more central role.

¶17. (U) Kassa also briefly mentioned the Wilson Center's role in organizing a workshop held December 3-4 around commemorations of U.S. academic Herbert Weiss's 50 years of working on and in the Congo. Although the number of expected participants was disappointing, they are significant players in the region, including the Minister of Decentralization and Territorial Administration Mbusa Nyamwisi, several parliamentary deputies, members of civil society and lawyers.

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